

Habakkuk

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Habakkuk

Chapter 1

The pronouncement made by the prophet Habakkuk.

How long, O ETERNAL One, shall I cry out And You not listen, Shall I shout to You, "Violence!" And You not save?

Why do You make me see iniquity [Why] do You look a [Why] do You look Targum and Syriac "So that I look." upon wrong?— Raiding and violence are before me, Strife continues and contention goes on. b goes on Meaning of Heb. uncertain.

That is why decision fails And justice never emerges; For villains hedge in those whose cause is just— Therefore judgment emerges deformed.

"Look among the nations, Observe well and be utterly astounded; For a work is being wrought in your days That you would not believe if it were told.

For lo, I am raising up the Chaldeans, That fierce, impetuous nation, Who cross the earth's wide spaces To seize homes not their own.

They are terrible, dreadful; They make their own laws and rules. c They make their own laws and rules Lit. "Their law and majesty proceed from themselves."

Their horses are swifter than leopards, Fleeter than wolves of the steppe. d steppe Understanding 'ereb as synonymous with 'arabah ; cf. Jer. 5.6. Their steeds gallop—their steeds e their steeds The Qumran Habakkuk commentary (hereafter 1QpHab) reads "and spread [wings]." Come flying from afar. Like vultures rushing toward food,

They all come, bent on rapine. The thrust f thrust Meaning of Heb. uncertain. of their van is forward, And they amass captives like sand. Kings they hold in derision, And princes are a joke to them; They laugh at every fortress, They pile up earth and capture it.

g Meaning of verse uncertain. Then they pass on like the wind, They transgress and incur guilt, For they ascribe their might to their god." You, O ETERNAL One, are from everlasting; My holy God, You h You Heb. "we," a change made by a pious scribe. never die. O ETERNAL One, You have made them a subject of contention; O Rock, You have made them a cause for complaint.

You whose eyes are too pure to look upon evil, Who cannot countenance wrongdoing, Why do You countenance treachery, And stand by idle While the one in the wrong devours The one in the right?

You have made humankind like the fish of the sea, Like creeping things that have no ruler. i that have no ruler 1QpHab "[for him] to rule over"; cf. Gen. 1.28; Ps. 8.7-9.

He has fished them all up with a line, Pulled them up in his trawl, And gathered them in his net. That is why he rejoices and is glad.

That is why he sacrifices to his trawl And makes offerings to his net; For through them his portion j portion Emendation yields "bread"; cf. Gen. 49.20. is rich And his nourishment fat.

Shall he then keep emptying his trawl, k emptying his trawl 1QpHab "drawing his sword." And slaying nations without pity?

Chapter 2

I will stand on my watch, Take up my station at the a the 1QpHab reads "my." post, And wait to see what [God] will say to me, b to me Or "through me"; cf. Num. 12.2. What will be the reply c What will be the reply Taking 'ashib as equivalent to yashib. to my complaint.

G OD answered me and said: Write the prophecy down, Inscribe it clearly on tablets, So that it can be read easily.

For there is yet a prophecy d there is yet a prophecy Emendation yields "the prophecy is a witness." for a set term, A truthful witness for a time that will come. Even if it tarries, wait for it still; For it will surely come, without delay:

Lo, their spirit within them is puffed up, not upright, But e Lo, their spirit within them is puffed up, not upright, / But Meaning of Heb. uncertain. Emendation yields "Lo, there is a reward for the upright- / the life breath within them- / And..." the righteous are rewarded with life For their fidelity.

How much less then shall the defiant f defiant Connecting hyyn (1QpHab hwn) with the root hwn, Deut. 1.41; for the thought cf. Prov. 11.31. Meaning of rest of line uncertain. go unpunished, The treacherous, the arrogant Who have made their maw as wide as Sheol, Who are as insatiable as Death, Who have harvested all the nations And gathered in all the peoples!

Surely all these shall pronounce a satire against them, A pointed epigram concerning them. They shall say: Ah, you who pile up what is not yours- How much longer?- And make ever heavier your load of indebtedness!

Right suddenly will your creditors g creditors Lit. "usurers." arise, And those who remind h remind Lit. "shake"; the same verb means "to call to mind" in Samaritan Aramaic. you will awake, And you will be despoiled by them.

Because you plundered many nations, All surviving peoples shall plunder you- For crimes against humans and wrongs against lands, Against cities and all their inhabitants.

Ah, you who have acquired gains To the detriment of your own house, Who have destroyed many peoples i Who have destroyed many peoples Moved up from v. 10 for clarity. In order to set your nest on high To escape disaster!

You have plotted shame for your own house, And guilt for yourself; For a stone shall cry out from the wall, And a rafter shall answer it from the woodwork.

Ah, you who have built a town with crime, And established a city with infamy,

So that peoples have had to toil for the fire, j for the fire I.e., without profit. And nations to weary themselves for naught! k Connection with the next four lines uncertain; they might read better after v. 20. Behold, it is from G OD of Hosts:

For the earth shall be filled With awe for G OD 's glory As water covers the sea. l For the earth ... the sea Cf. Isa. 11.9.

Ah, you who make others drink to intoxication As you pour out m As you pour out Meaning of Heb. uncertain. Emendation yields "from the bowl of." your wrath, In order to gaze upon their nakedness! n nakedness Cf. Gen. 9.21-22.

You shall be sated with shame Rather than glory: Drink in your turn and stagger! o stagger Emendation yields "uncover yourself"; cf. Lam. 4.21. The cup in G OD 's right hand Shall come around to you, And disgrace to p disgrace to Or "vomit of disgrace upon." your glory.

For the lawlessness against Lebanon shall cover you, The destruction of animals shall overwhelm you q For the lawlessness ... overwhelm you Meaning of Heb. uncertain. - For crimes against humans and wrongs against lands, Against cities and all their inhabitants.

r This verse would read well after v. 19. What has the carved image availed, That its maker has carved it For an image and a false oracle— That the one who makes an item has trusted in it, Producing dumb idols? Ah, you who say, "Wake up" to wood, "Awaken," to inert stone! Can that give an oracle? Why, it is encased in gold and silver, But there is no breath inside it.

But G OD in the holy Abode— Be silent before [God], all the earth!

Chapter 3

A prayer of the prophet Habakkuk. In the mode of Shigionoth. a Shigionoth Meaning uncertain; perhaps "psalms of supplication"; cf. Ps. 7.1.

O E TERNAL One! I have learned of Your renown; I am awed, O E TERNAL One, by Your deeds. Renew them in these years, Oh, make them known in these years! Though angry, may You remember compassion.

God is coming from Teman, The Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah. b Selah A musical direction of uncertain meaning. God's majesty covers the skies, Such splendor fills the earth:

c Meaning of verse uncertain. It is a brilliant light That gives off rays on every side— And therein God's glory is enveloped.

Pestilence marches in front, And plague comes forth at God's heels.

God's standing up makes the earth shake; d shake Cf. Targum and Septuagint. A mere glance makes nations tremble. The age-old mountains are shattered, The primeval hills sink low. God's routes are ancient: As a scene of havoc I behold e God's routes ... I behold Meaning of Heb. uncertain. The tents of Cushan; Shaken are the pavilions Of the land of Midian!

Are You wroth, O E TERNAL One, with Neharim? Is Your anger against Neharim, Your rage against Yam f Neharim...Yam Neharim (lit. "Floods") and Yam (lit. "Sea") were marine monsters vanquished by G OD in hoary antiquity. On Yam see Ps. 74.13; Job 7.12. A being called both Yam and Nahar figures in early Canaanite literature. — That You are driving Your steeds, Your victorious chariot?

All bared and ready is Your bow. Sworn are the rods of the word. g Sworn are the rods of the word Meaning of Heb. uncertain. Selah. You make the earth burst into streams,

The mountains rock at the sight of You, A torrent of rain comes down; Loud roars the deep, The sky returns the echo. h The sky returns the echo Meaning of Heb. uncertain.

Sun [and] moon stand still on high As Your arrows fly in brightness, Your flashing spear in brilliance.

You tread the earth in rage, You trample nations in fury.

You have come forth to deliver Your people, To deliver Your anointed. i Your anointed I.e., the king of Judah. You will smash the roof of the villain's house, Raze it from foundation to top. Selah.

You will crack [the enemy's] skull with Your j Your Heb. 3rd person. bludgeon; Blown away shall be his warriors, Whose delight is to crush me suddenly, To devour a pauper in an ambush. k You will smash ... in an ambush Emendation yields: "You will strike the heads of evildoers, / Smash the pates of Your adversaries. Selah. / You will crack their skulls with Your bludgeon; / Dispersed, blown like chaff shall be they / Who lie in wait to swallow the innocent, / To devour the poor in an ambush."

You will make Your steeds tread the sea, Stirring the mighty waters.

I heard and my bowels quaked, My lips quivered at the sound; Rot entered into my bone, I trembled where I stood. Yet I wait calmly for the day of distress, For a people to come to attack us.

Though the fig tree does not bud And no yield is on the vine, Though the olive crop has failed And the fields produce no grain, Though sheep have vanished from the fold And no cattle are in the pen, l Or: 15" You will make Your steeds tread the sea, / Stirring the mighty waters, / 16That I

may have rest on a day of distress, / When a people come up to attack us.
/ But this report made my bowels quake, / These tidings made my lips
quiver; / Rot entered into my bone, / I trembled where I stood: / 17That
the fig tree does not bud, / And no yield is on the vine; / The olive
crop has failed, / And the fields produce no grain; / The sheep have
vanished from the fold, / And no cattle are in the pen."

Yet will I rejoice in G OD, Exult in the God who delivers me.

The Sovereign G OD is my strength, Making my feet like the deer's And
letting me stride upon the heights. For the leader; with instrumental
music. m For the leader; with instrumental music Meaning of Heb.
uncertain.